

SPOROBOLUS COAHUILENSIS (POACEAE):
A NEW RECORD FOR THE U.S.A FROM
TRANS-PECOS, TEXAS

B.L. Turner

Plant Resources Center
University of Texas
Austin, Texas 78713, U.S.A.

Recent collections by the present author in southern Brewster County has revealed the presence of at least two new, presumably natural, populations of the poorly known *S. coahuilensis* Valdes, heretofore known only by a few collections from gypseous soils of south-central Coahuila, Mexico (Fig. 1). Study of the grass collection at SRSC revealed three additional collections of the taxon from Brewster County made by yet others, these all identified as *S. pulvinatus* Swallen, and mapped as such by Turner et al. (2003). The Reederers of ARIZ suggested that an additional collection from along the Rio Grande in Hudspeth County might also belong to the taxon, which proved to be so. All of these collections follow:

TEXAS: Brewster Co.: West end of Maverick Mt., near Study Butte, 8 Nov 1991, Powell 5805 (collected by Michael Clark); ca. 3 mi SW of Hen Egg Mt., 2.8 mi W of Hwy. 118 along unpaved South County Road, clayey soils immediately along roadside (ca 29° 27, 103° 33), 31 Oct 2003, B.L. Turner 23-325 (SRSC, TEX); 3.4 mi W of Hwy 118 along South County Road, gypseous silty clays, 26 Dec 2003, Turner 23-335 (SRSC, TEX); Study Butte, 30 Oct 1966, Warnock 23434 (SRSC); N of Study Butte, 25 Oct 1968, Warnock 23395? (SRSC). **Hudspeth Co.:** Quitman Mts., S tip of mountains at Indian Hot Springs Resort, "seep area along road at base of hill near Rio Grande," 3400 ft, 12 Oct 1980, Worthington 6804 (UTEP).

In the treatment of the *Grasses of the Southwestern United States* by Gould (1988), the above collections will key to *Sporobolus patens* Swallen. Gould noted that the latter is "known only from the type collection made at Wilcox, Cochise County, Arizona (*Silveus* 3504, September 26, 1938)." He also noted that *S. patens* might prove to be but a variant of *S. pulvinatus*. *Sporobolus coahuilensis* differs from both in having more numerous smaller florets on longer, more divaricate, pedicels, as nicely illustrated by Valdes (1978) in his original description of the taxon.

In the treatment of the grasses of the Trans-Pecos and adjacent areas by Powell (1994), *S. coahuilensis* will key to *S. pulvinatus*, the only annual species said to occur in the area concerned. Indeed, as already noted, Powell referred several of the above cited specimens to *S. pulvinatus*, the latter readily distinguished from *S. coahuilensis* by its less open inflorescence and appressed florets on shorter pedicels. In the Trans-Pecos, typical elements of *S. pulvinatus*

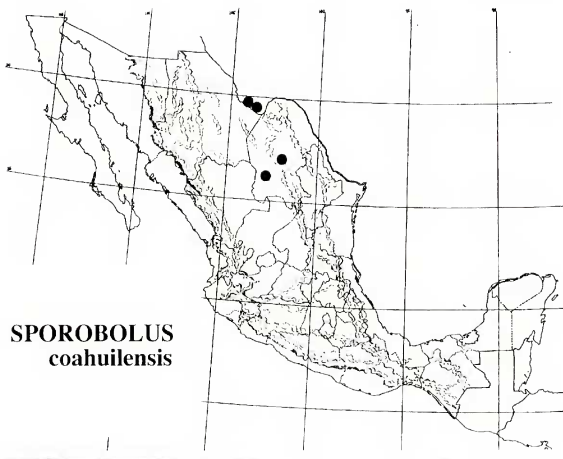


FIG. 1. Distribution of *Sporobolus coahuilensis*.

are known only from El Paso County, these having been reported by Correll and Johnston (1970) as *S. patens*, but subsequently referred to *S. pulvinatus* by Johnston (1990). Turner et al. (2003) mapped the latter as also occurring in southern Brewster County; such plants are accepted herein as *S. coahuilensis*.

In the account of *Sporobolus* for the *Flora of North America* (Peterson et al. 2003), *S. coahuilensis* will key to *S. pyramidatus* (Lam.) Hitchc. Unfortunately, the names *S. patens* and *S. pulvinatus* are not accounted for in their treatment; presumably, they regard the two names as synonymous with their concept of *S. pyramidatus*. Regardless, Peterson (pers. comm.) recognizes *S. coahuilensis* as distinct, as do most recent workers interested in Mexican grasses (e.g., Ortiz, by annotation, TEX).

In the area of Hen Egg Mt. where I first collected *S. coahuilensis* the population concerned was composed of 40 or more very uniform, late-flowering individuals growing with or near the much more abundant earlier flowering *S. pyramidatus*. By no stretch of my imagination might I have included these under the fabric of *S. pyramidatus*. Subsequent collections of *S. coahuilensis* from this same area (on 26 Dec 2003) showed that the latter occurred among or with numerous specimens of *S. pyramidatus*, there being no discernable intermedi-

ates between the taxa. During this second visit, approximately nine specimens of *S. coahuilensis* were detected growing with *S. pyramidatus* along a transect of some 40 yards along the edge of a recently plowed roadside.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to Charlotte Reeder for calling to my attention that the taxon concerned might be *S. coahuilensis*, and to her husband John, for yet other helpful comments. Thanks also to Richard Worthington at UTEP for the loan of *S. coahuilensis* from Hudspeth Co., the specimen itself composed of ca. five very uniform individuals mounted upon a single sheet.

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